THE CHURCH
ON THE
WESTERN WATERS

An History of Greenbrier Presbytery and Its Churches

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CHAPTER X

ON THE GREENBRIER

WITH the coming of the Chesapeake and Ohio Railroad, and the subsequent developments in the Greenbrier River Valley which it follows for a considerable distance, including the Greenbrier Valley Division, numerous towns were established along its course through the Valley. The establishment of centers of population afforded the Church its opportunity, and those who have made this Presbytery have known what to do with opportunities: they have taken advantage of them constructively. Within a period of seven years, four churches were organized in as many towns in the Greenbrier Valley, all of which have advanced to high rank among the churches of the Presbytery.

XVIII. HINTON CHURCH

In connection with the church at Hinton and that at Alderson, which is the next church to be noted, it will be of interest to quote a paragraph from the address of Dr. William T. Price on the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of the organization of Greenbrier Presbytery: "Hinton and Alderson churches are located in the flourishing railroad towns bearing their names, respectively, and the region occupied by them was once a part of the field occupied by Rev. M. H. Bittinger, D.D., whose long and faithful service as pastor of the Centerville Church has already been noted." In that connection Dr. Price quotes Dr. Bittinger as saying: "I frequently visited those localities and preached, holding at times sacramental meetings at which persons were received into the membership of the church. At those points the churches of Hinton and Alderson have been organized, into which members of Centerville Church entered and so were lost to us."

The Hinton Church was organized in 1874 with six members. Rev. H. R. Laird became the first pastor in 1876, continuing his service in that capacity for two years. The complete roll of ministers of the Hinton Church is as follows:

H. R. Laird	1876-1878
J. W. Wightman	1884-1889
J. W. Holt	1889-1900
D. R. Frierson	1901-1903
D. W. Hollingsworth	1904-1910
J. McD. Lacy	1910-1918
V. P. Merrell	1919-1920
J. W. Rowe	1920-1927
A. H. Clarke	1928 to the present

Mr. Clarke, present pastor of the Hinton Church, has been the efficient chairman of the Presbytery's Commission of the Minister and His Work since the creation of this new agency of the Presbytery in 1937.

XIX. ALDERSON CHURCH

Alderson Church was organized in 1876 and, as was true of the Hinton Church, Rev. H. R. Laird became the first pastor. Rev. J. H. Lewis had served the congregation for two years immediately preceding its organization.

The original building of the Alderson Church, owned at first jointly with the Masonic Lodge, and later by the congregation, was occupied by the congregation until 1926, when the beautiful stone building now occupied was erected.

From the home of Rev. J. M. Sloan, pastor from 1895 to 1915, came three missionaries of our Church, namely, Miss Margaret Sloan, missionary to China; Miss Jenny Sloan, missionary worker in Kentucky, and Dr. Dwight M. Sloan, medical missionary to China.

The Alderson Church also gave to the Presbyterian Church in the United States one of its most distinguished ministers, scholars and teachers in the person of Rev. Thomas Cary Johnson, D.D., for many years professor at Union Theological Seminary at Richmond.

Roll of Ministers of the Alderson Church:

H. R. Laird	1876-1883
J. H. Lewis	1884-1885
E. D. Jeffries	1885-1895
J. M. Sloan	1895-1915
J. L. Lineweaver	1916-1918
J. E. Flow	1918-1922
Paul Nickell	1923-1928
Dupuy Holladay	1929 to the present

Dr. Flow, pastor of the Alderson Church from 1918 to 1922, resigned that pastorate to assume the work of Presbytery's Evangelist. Dr. Flow's effective work in evangelism continued to 1928 when he was called to another field of labor.

XX. MARLINTON CHURCH

The church at Marlinton, originally known as "Marlin's Bottom," was organized in 1881. Dr. David S. Sydenstricker is credited with leadership in the organization of the church, which was organized with twelve members, and Dr. Sydenstricker served the church as supply for four years after its organization, until 1885. Dr. William T. Price then became pastor, serving until 1900 and being the first installed pastor of the Marlinton Church.

The writer here acknowledges again his indebtedness to the writings of Dr. Price for valuable data used in this sketch, and recognizes the service he rendered to the Presbytery in recording much of its early history, which otherwise would be difficult to obtain.

Ministers of the Marlinton Church in the order of their incumbency are:

David S. Sydenstricker, D.D.	1881-1885
William T. Price, D.D.	1885-1900
G. W. Nickell	1900-1907
A. S. Rashall	1909-1914
J. M. Walker	1914-1920
H. H. Orr	1921-1926
K. V. Bowen	1927-1932
Samuel B. Lapsley	1933-1938
James C. Wool	1938 to the present

The first building of the Marlinton congregation was erected in 1882 and used until 1915, when the present building was completed and occupied and dedicated in 1916.

Two men have gone from the Marlinton Church into the service of the gospel ministry: Rev. Henry W. McLaughlin, D.D., and Rev. Ewell V. Wiley.

XXI. RONCEVERTE CHURCH

After the completion of the Chesapeake & Ohio Railroad and the consequent development of the lumber industry on the Greenbrier River, a number of people from New York, Pennsylvania, and other states settled at Ronceverte, among them being several Presbyterians who transferred their membership to the Old Stone Church at Lewisburg. Dr. Matthew Lyle Lacy, pastor of the Old Stone Church, conducted occasional services at Ronceverte, preaching in a lumber mill or other places where the people would be assembled, and there is an interesting tradition of occasional services in the old covered bridge spanning the Greenbrier River.

To meet the need of a more adequate place of worship a church building was erected on Monroe Avenue, which was for some time used jointly by the Presbyterian, Protestant Episcopal, and Baptist congregations.

Six ministers have served this church as pastor since its organization: Jacob H. Lewis, E. D. Jeffries, George T. Lyle, F. P. Sydenstricker, J. W. Holt, and W. A. Benfield.

XXIV. BIG SPRING CHURCH

Big Spring Church was organized by Rev. J. M. Sloan, evangelist, August 25, 1894. This church, which has always been associated with other churches in home mission groupings, has had the ministerial services of the following ministers: Rev. G. W. Nickell, Rev. H. W. McLaughlin, Rev. Asa D. Watkins, Rev. Walter W. Bain, Rev. F. W. Gray, Rev. W. P. Gibbs, and for many years past Rev. O. N. Miles.

The building occupied by the Big Spring congregation was erected in 1911.

XXV. ALEXANDER MEMORIAL

Alexander Memorial Church was organized in 1894 with a special view to serving the people to the west of the Greenbrier River in upper Pocahontas County, a section which up to that time had had no Presbyterian church. The Presbyterian constituency in that region formerly held membership in Liberty, Baxter and Dunmore churches. The location of the church, now called Stony Bottom, was then called Driftwood, and the church was first named Driftwood Church. The name Alexander Memorial, though used before that time, was not formally chosen until 1931. This church was associated successively with Dunmore and Liberty churches, with Linwood and Mingo churches, and now with the church at Cass.

For many years, until 1930, mission points of the Alexander Memorial Church were Clover Lick, Poage Lane, and Thomas Spring School House on Clover Creek.

Rev. W. F. Alexander, who was stated supply at the time of organization, was the first pastor of the Alexander Memorial Church, serving in that pastorate from 1894 to 1895.

Other ministers who have served this congregation as pastor or supply are:

H. W. McLaughlin (student) ---------- 1896
H. W. McLaughlin (pastor) ---------- 1900-1904
R. E. Fultz ---------- 1904-1907
W. W. Bain ---------- 1907-1909
S. B. Hanna (student) ----------
H. H. Leach (student) ----------
W. P. Gibbs (student) ----------
W. P. Gibbs (pastor) ---------- 1916
W. J. Flint (student) ---------- 1917
O. N. Miles (pastor) ---------- 1918-1930
J. T. Pharr ---------- 1930 to the present

XXVI. CLIFTON CHURCH

Clifton Church at Maxwelton was organized September 23, 1900, by a commission of the Presbytery composed of the following: Rev. Matthew Lyle Lacy, D.D., Rev. William McC. White, Rev. R. L. Telford, D.D., with Ruling Elder Jonathan Mays. Clifton Church traces its origin to home mission work of Dr. Matthew Lyle Lacy about 1870 when he began holding prayer meetings in the homes of the people and later with increased attendance at Arbuckle School House. Also a Sunday school, conducted only in the summer months at first, was organized by Mr. John D. Arbuckle, who was an elder in the Old Stone Church at Lewisburg. The original membership of fifty-eight has been increased to four hundred and sixty-nine.

The following ministers have served Clifton Church in the pastorate:

C. D. Gilkeson, D.D.	1901-1904
J. B. Massey, D.D.	1904-1907
J. L. Lineweaver, D.D.	1908-1917
F. W. Phillips	1917-1924
J. P. Proffitt, D.D.	1925 to the present

Dr. Proffitt's pastorate, which has continued for thirteen years, is the longest pastorate in the history of Clifton Church. The church has enjoyed memorable seasons of revival, especially under the preaching of Dr. Gilkeson during his pastorate and of Rev. W. W. Sprouse in the present pastorate.

A number of ministers have gone out from the Clifton Church, namely, Rev. J. Marion Sydenstricker, missionary to Brazil; Rev. O. N. Miles, Rev. C. Irving Lewis, Rev. Frank Lewis, and Rev. J. D. Arbuckle, the latter being a grandson of Mr. John D. Arbuckle, one of the founders of the Clifton Church. Also two young men, James Garrett and Day Carper, are now preparing themselves for the work of the gospel ministry.

In the summer of this year (1938) an annex twenty-eight by thirty-four feet was added to the church building, "to be used for general church purposes."

XXVII. WESTMINSTER CHURCH

Westminster Church was organized by a commission of Greenbrier Presbytery October 24, 1903, when members of the Huntersville Church living near the present site of Westminster Church petitioned the Presbytery for a separate organization. The building now occupied by the Westminster Church was erected in the year of its organization, 1903.

For the first part of its history, Westminster Church was associated with the Huntersville Church, and for several years

past it has been grouped with Liberty, Dunmore, and Huntersville churches.

The following ministers have served as pastors of the Westminster Church: Rev. G. W. Nickell, Rev. A. W. Rashall, Rev. J. M. Walker, Rev. W. Graham Wood, Rev. D. McD. Monroe, Rev. A. B. Williford. Especially notable is the pastorate of Rev. G. W. Nickell, during whose ministry the church was launched and the church building completed.

XXVIII. CASS CHURCH

Cass, in Pocahontas County, has for a number of years been the center of an extensive lumber industry, and a considerable amount of lumber is still produced in that area. The citizenship of Cass is unusually cosmopolitan in character.

A Presbyterian church, taking the name Cass Presbyterian Church, was organized there in 1904, by Rev. Asa Watkins and Ruling Elder J. S. Matthews. The Cass Church was for a number of years associated with Liberty Church at Greenbank.

The building occupied by the Cass congregation was erected in 1904 and remodeled in 1923. It was partially destroyed by fire in March, 1927, and was repaired and remodeled later in that same year.

The Cass Church was organized with a membership of twelve, and today reports an active membership of one hundred and thirty-six. "This church has for years sent a steady stream of young people into city churches in this and adjoining states."

This church has enjoyed an aggressive leadership and is active in all its various departments, being noted for the fine young people it has developed in the Church's service. The work of its Woman's Auxiliary has been especially efficient.

The Cass Church has in the past maintained outpost work in certain nearby lumbering settlements, notably at Spruce and Raywood, but these have been discontinued as the lum-

ber operations in these settlements have closed and the people have moved away.

A number of active workers in the Church's service have gone out from the Cass Church, among whom may be named Rev. T. L. Harnsbarger, missionary to Africa; Miss Alice Hannah, teacher of missionaries' children in Africa, and Rev. Lewis Lyle, now serving in Chicago, Ill.

Roll of Ministers:

Asa Watkins, D.D.	1904-1907
W. W. Bain	1907-1910
J. S. Kennison	1910-1912
Louis A. Kelly	1912-1915
Fred W. Gray, D.D.	1918-1929
James T. Pharr	1929 to the present

XXIX. WHITE SULPHUR CHURCH

The work at White Sulphur Springs which resulted in the organization of a church at that place was done by Rev. F. P. Sydenstricker. Mr. Sydenstricker was preaching two Sundays each month on Anthony's Creek and it was his custom to spend the night at White Sulphur Springs, conducting prayer meeting in the old school house. In 1913 Rev. W. W. Pharr, associate pastor of the Old Stone Church, took over the work begun by Mr. Sydenstricker, and for two years (1913-1915) continued in that work. The church was organized in 1915 with the name White Sulphur Springs Presbyterian Church, and Rev. W. W. Pharr became its first pastor, serving in that capacity for two years.

For a short time after its organization the congregation met in the old theatre building, and on May 19, 1915, the congregation took action looking to the erection of a house of worship. The building was dedicated on Easter Sunday, April 23, 1916, with Dr. Eugene C. Caldwell, professor at Union